UNITED
NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/5/Add.46/Amend.1
1 September 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties

TURKEY

V.89-59009

Introduction

1. The CEDAW report makes a big point of the fact that discrimination against women still persists in many countries despite the fact that official recognition has been given to such epoch-making documents as the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which unfailingly recognize that men and women are equal and afford the equal rights in all spheres, whether these be political, social, economic, or cultural etc. This is, unfortunately, very much the case in Turkey.

2. In Turkey, the equality of men and women received official recognition early in the history of women's rights, largely, or perhasp wholely, due to the foresight of the founder, and the great leader, of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The following statement is representative of Atatürk's views on the potential of women in general and his plans for the immediate future of Turkish women in particular. He said:

> "We should acknowledge in good faith that everything in the world is shaped by women. If a community is content to meet the needs of only half of its members that society is depriving itself of half of its potential. A nation, if it is to achieve a civilized and prosperous way of life, must give equal importance to its men and to its women. We must make it a principle that our women are as enlightened and as well educated as our men, so that the Turkish women

and the Turkish men shall go forward side by side, giving help and support to each other and sharing all things equally."

3. These words were spoken in 1923 (the year when The Turkish Republic was founded) and starting in 1924 a series of reforms was enacted which showed just how sincerely Atatürk had spoken. The first was the Act of Co-education (1924) which gave women equal education right with men. This was followed in 1926 by the Turkish Civil Law, which replaced the religious code that had previously dominated the country and kept women in a subservient position. In many European countries women achieved their rights only after a long and tedious struggle; in Turkey, however, women were afforded their rights by Atatürk in conjunction with Parliament, without their having to campaign for them. Briefly the main points of the Civil Law, in so far as it pertains to women's equality with men, can be summarized as follows:

--Polygamy was brought to an end. Religious marriages were not recognized by law, and by civil law a man could only have one wife.

--Women as well as men could sue for divorce.

--The mother was given equal rights with the father over guardianship of the children.

--For women as well as for men a minimum age was set for marriage.

--Marriage by proxy was made illegal.

--A married woman could own property separately from her husband.

--Men and women held equal rights of inheritance.

In 1934 Universal suffrage was introduced; everyone of 21 years and over was given the vote in this year and moreover everyone of 30 and over could stand for parliament, men and woman alike.

4. During these years, then, the woman of Turkey had, as regards the law, come a long way along the road towards the enjoymenet of equal rights with men. In theory the women of Turkey were in most respects made equal to the men. The practice, however, often lags for behind the theory. So it was in Turkey at this time, particularly in the poorer, less developed, rural parts of the country. Too many women were not in a position to understand their rights, never mind claim them.

5. Thus in Turkey the position of women is not troubled by legal restraints but by other less tangible conditions that are unfortunately harder to come to grips with.

Part One Of The Report

6. It is firmly written into the constitution of Turkey that there shall be no discrimination between men and women, and, indeed no discrimination of anv kind. Discrimination it should be pointed out here, is basically foreign to the Turkish temperament; there can be no social discrimination in a nation which so many differnt bloods mix, and the Turkish tradition of Islam is essentially inclusive as in Mevlana's[1] famous invocation, "Come, whoever you are, come", and the social structure is similarly free-flowing and democratic. Before the law, the men and women of Turkey enjoy almost full equality. There are a few laws that may be interpretted as discriminating against women, but

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[1] The famous Turkish mystic post who lived in the 13th century.

more that discriminate in her favour. It is not however, the law itself that is of paramount importance, but the interpretation of the law and its implementation.

7. It is always dangerous to generalize and in Turkey it is particularly so. Turkey is not single, unified and amalgamated. The constant is variety; variety as regards climate, physical structure, natural resources, historical inheritance and of course the people. In particular there is a striking difference between the rural, underdeveloped eastern stretches of the country and the better developed western regions with their higher living standards and large urban populations. In the west, in general, the women share a position of equality with the men. In the east, however, the old, stereotyped role of the women in society tends to persist. This is not, per se, an inferior position for the woman and in particular the mother is honoured; to give just one very obvious example, there are probably as many schools and roads in Turkey that are named after Zübeyde hanım, the mother of Atatürk, as are named after Atatürk himself. The mother then, holds a position of honour, and family, as an institution, is sacrosanct.

8. It is interesting that Turkey has not become so coscious of "women's rights" as have many countries. This may, in part, have a simple, linguistic cause. Advertisements for jobs are not burdened with he/she or him/her for there is only one word for he-she-it. There is further no differentiation between Miss and Mrs; a woman's title is the same whatever her marital status.

Population

9. The rapid increase in the population of Turkey has had a detrimental effect upon the position of women by keeping them in the home and preventing them from coming to a realization of their full potential.

The increase in the population has also intensified economic, education and health service problems, and these too have all had an adverse effect on the women of the country.

10. In the census of 1927 the population of Turkey was just over 13.6 milion. There has been a steady increase since then and in the last census, in 1985 the population was over 50 milion. Great efforts have been made to make the country family planning conscious and to educate people in the use of birth control. In the towns, family planning has been largely accepted. In the rural parts, however, inspite of large-scale, nation-wide campaigns success has been rather limited. When families of 14 children have been the norm, it is not easy to reeducate people and it is a long slow process, particularly as illiteracy is still prevalent in many of the rural areas. However, though the population continues to increase it is no longer increasing as rapidly as it was. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Population Growth (Thousands)

Year	Population	Absolute Intercensal Increase	Annual Intercensal Increase %
1927	13,648		
		2,510	21.10
1935	16,158		
		1,663	18,32
1940	17,821		
		969	10,59
1945	18,790		
		2,157	21.73
1950	20,947		
		3,118	27.75
1955	24,065		
		3,690	28.53
1960	27,755		
		3,636	24,62
1965	31,391		
		4,214	25.19
1970	35,605		
		4,743	25.00
1975	40,348		
		4,389	20.65
1980	44,737		
		5,927	24.88
1985	50,664		

Illiteracy

11. One factor that inevitably prevents the women of Turkey from achieving their full potential, is illiteracy; and the problems of combatting illiteracy have been greatly magnified by the rapid increase in the population that has characterized this century. Table 2 gives the illiteracy figures for the population aged 6 and over for the last three

census years. Inspite of the steady increase in the population during these years the table shows a gradual decrease in the percentage of illiteracy, though between 1975 and 1980 there was an increase in gross illiteracy among the female population, which is reflected also in the total population. The figures for 1985 show a reassuring drop in illiteracy following a general literacy campaign launched in 1980 and still continuing. The aim is to get illiteracy down to 10% by the early 1990's. The table shows a clear rise in the level of literacy, but it also points to a rather disquieting trend. Of the illiterate population, there is a steady rise in the percentage of women with the figures rising from 66% in 1975 to 67% in 1980 and to 70% in 1985.

Table 2: Illiteracy Rate in Turkey for the Last Three Census For Those Aged Six and Over:

	1975	1980	1985
Total Pop.	33.531	37.524	43.112
Illiterate	12.144	12.197	9.703
%	36%	32%	23%
Male Pop.	17.256	18.999	21.801
Illiterate	4.096	3.802	2.933
%	24%	20%	13%
Female Pop.	16.274	18.525	21.311
Illiterate	8.048	8.394	6.770
%	49%	45%	32%

Education

12. At the school level there is less obvious disparity between the male and female parts of the population as is clearly shown in Table 3. The figures here point to an increase in the percentage of girl students completing the various levels and types of schooling.

Table 3: Literate Population by Education Completed/Sex (%)

Cenus	Primary Ed. not completed		Primary School		Middle School Vocational		Lycee Vocational		College/ University	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
1970	36.68	34.80	49.53	51.41	5.24	7.02	4.20	4.90	1.35	1.9
1975	30.69	27.33	57.55	56.29	6.10	8.71	4.84	6.14	0.82	2.0
1980	26.81	23.04	57.50	55.27	9.52	6.83	6.74	8.03	2.12	4.1
1985	26.53	21.84	57.94	55.12	9.80	6.60	7.27	9.46	1.66	3.7

There is a marked drop in the number of girls who do not complete their primary education; the trend for boys runs roughly parallel. The table shows that a larger percentage of women than of men finish their formal education at Primary and Middle School level and that a larger percentage of men than of women complete their education at lycee and university level.

13. There are, however, other types of educational facilities which are attracting girls and older women. Schools or training centres for applied handicrafts have become very popular especially among the 10-14 age group and enrollments have gone up from 33,000 in 1961 to 110,000 in 1984. There are other similar schools and training centres including both adult reading and writing classes and technical education in ceramic-making. There are also television programmes, specially designed for women, to help raise the levels of their social and formal education.

14. At the level of higher education there are just over half as many women as men. However, since entrance to university is on the results of a competitive examination, this disparity is not due to policy but to choice.

15. The distribution of the students among the different fields of study suggests that certain areas are favoured by women and others by men. More women study literature and languages than men do and more study art and design and the performing arts. In the technical sciences males are in a large majority, but even here there are female students in every branch as can be seen in Table 4. In the applied social sciences the overall number of the males exceeds that of the females, but in certain areas there are more women students than men as Table 5 shows. Here the distribution suggests a healthy sharing of opportunities in accord with inclination, talent and practicalities.

Table 4: Distributien of Students in Some of The Fields of Technical Sciences in the Aca emic Year 1987-88, by Sex.

	New Admissions					Total of Enrolled Students				
Branch	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Engineering Sciences	57	37	65	20	35	259	199	77	60	23
Environmental Studies	254	137	54	117	46	1084	531	49	553	51
Meteorolgy	52	41	79	11	21	252	181	72	71	28
Aeronautics	24	19	79	5	21	135	117	87	18	13
Aircraft	84	73	87	11	13	362	334	92	28	8
Geology	794	617	78	177	22	3629	2801	77	828	23
Mining	448	403	90	45	10	2091	1905	91	186	9
Metalurgy	292	254	87	38	13	1476	1312	89	164	11
Mechanical Eng.	2273	2056	90	217	10	11539	10538	91	1001	9
Marine Sciences	153	143	93	10	7	671	639	95	32	5
Cumputer Sciences	386	313	81	73	19	1754	1407	80	347	20
Electronics	1913	1688	88	225	12	9502	8351	88	1151	12
Total	6730	5781		949		32754	28315		4439	

Table 5: Distribution of Students in The Field of Applied Social Sciences in The Academic Year 1987-88 by Sex.

	New Admissions					Total of Enrolled Students				
Branch	Total	Male	%	Female	%	Total	Male	%	Female	%
Law	2513	1810	72	703	28	14390	9340	65	5050	35
Pol.Sic.and Pub.Adm.	1809	1325	73	484	77	7780	5779	74	2001	26
Economic Sci.	2426	1620	67	806	33	10742	7016	65	3726	35
Management	4726	2999	63	1727	37	20497	13172	64	7325	36
Mass Commn.and Media	1013	412	41	601	59	4271	1893	44	2378	56
Total	12487	8166		4321		57680	37200		20480	

Employment

16. As regards the law, there is in Turkey-with very few exceptions-no discrimination made between male and female as regards employment, and there is equal pay for equal work. The fact remains, however, that a very large proportion of the top level jobs are held by women. This is partly an outcome of the lower educational level of the average woman in comparison with the average man, and partly due to less in the way of vocational training. However it may also be regarded, in part, as a sign of what one may call "proverty of desire" on the part of the Turkish woman. Married women in particular generally want work that is not too demanding, that will allow them to fulfil at the same time their roles of wife and mother too.

17. One very obvious place vhere there are few women, is the Parliament. Table 6 shows the number of women MPs since 1935 when they first had the right to be elected to Parliament. In te first Parliament there were 18 women MPs. There have never been so many since. The reasons were probably various. It may be partly that as Turkish women did not have to light for this right. It may be that political parties are not confident in the aibilty of women candidates to attract votes. Turkey has now, for the first time a woman Minister, chosen from among the goverment's party representatives. It has taken half a century for this to happen. Whether this situation of disparity can be ignored and left to right itself or whether active measures sholud be taken to encourage more women to enter politics, is a subject that deserves serious consideration. Various efforts have been made to introduce legislation whereby, at the elections, 20-30% of the candidates of each party should be women, but this recommendation has so far not received recognition.

Table 6: Women Members of Parliament in Turkey Since The Founding of the Republic.

Election Year	No. of Women MPs.
1935	18
1939	16
1943	16
1946	9
1950	3
x	4
1961	3
1965	8
1969	5
1981	4
1983	12
1987	6

x These were specially appointed Parliaments.
The total number of MPs is normally about 450.

Table 7: Participation in Labour Force (%)

Year	Female	Male	Total
1927	81.5	94.6	87.3
1950	81.5	95.6	88.4
1975	46.8	89.3	68.5
1985 (Estimate)	35.5	64.6	42.6

18. In other spheres, however, there are women in posts of very high responsibility. In the universities there have been women rectors, and there are many women deans and heads of department. Many women have risen to the top in the legal world, and many of the best doctors and surgeons are women. There are many women bank-managers and top-ranking administrators, and there are many women in business too.

19. Since the founding of the Republic in 1927 there has been a considerable increase in the members of women entering the work force, inspite of the fact that there has been a decrease in the percentage of working women (See Table 7). During these years a new type of working women has come to the fore as can be seen in Table 8 which shows the distribution of the female population according to vocation. The main trend shown is that of a move form agriculture towards industry and technical vocations which is also, of course, a reflection of the country's general economic trend. In 1927, for instance, over 96% of the women workers were in agriculture and less than 2% were in industry.

20. As already stated, there is almost no discrimination against women as regards employment before the law. One exception is with the armed forces. Women may and do join the forces and hold officer's rank, but their participation is limited to educational and administrative spheres. Otherwise, there is only one post a woman may not, by law, hold, and that is the post of governor of a region ("Kaymakam"). This is an old law and has somehow continued as a tradition. It is clearly an anachronism as other, higher administrative posts are open to women. This law is now in the process of being changed.

21. There are also certain types of work, of a heavy or dangerous nature, for which it is illegal to employ women. This is not a question of discrimination against women, but a question of protection. Young people between 16 and 18 years of age, of both sexes, are similarly protected in this way. Women may not be employed in underground or underwater work or on road and railway construction; they may not do foundry work or work with explosives; if night work is involved there are special conditions for the protection of women, in particular their safe transportation to and from work. New legislation of this kind has led to a significant reduction in accidents causing permanent disability.

Table 6 : Distribution of the Female Population According to Vocation (%)

Year of Census	Overall Total	Agriculture	Industry	Commerce	Free Enterprize	Civil Servant	Judge	Army	Communications	Various	Vocations Total
1927	7074864	96.16	1.85	0.50	0.42	0.08	0.008	0.0005	0.014	0.96	1.756.719

Years of Census	Ovarall Total	Agriculture	Industry, Handicrafts, Mining, Building	Commerce	Transport	General Services Professions	Home Economics Personal Services	Vocations Total
1935	8220938	94.25	3.93	0.35	0.09	0.54	0.84	3,285,677
1940	8922038	92.95	1.52	0.21	0.05	0.38	0.16	6,607,669
1945	934594	93.07	3.98	0.53	0.16	1.53	0.73	2,066,746

Year of Census	Overall Total	Technical Personnel and Professionals	Free Enterprize	Administrative Civil Servant	Commerce	Agriculture and Forestry	Mining and Quarrying	Transport and Communications	Artisan Manufacture and	Skilled and Unskilled	Related to Service	Vocation Tota
1950	8912793	0.38	0.43	0.30	0.07	95.50	0.008	0.19	2.33	0.52	0.35	5700095
1955	7306500	0.55	0.49	-	0.12	95.82	0.012	0.037	2.16	0.32	0.48	5282842
1960	8104294	0.75	0.63	-	0.08	94.98	0.008	0.059	2.59	0.31	0.58	5202908
1965	9072782	1.21	0.89	-	0.10	94.18	0.010	0.070	2.78	0.14	0.62	5134823

Year of	Overall Total	Scientists and Technical Personnel	Free Enterprize	Administrative Personnel	Commerce and Sales Personnel	Personal Services	Agriculture Forestry Animal Husbandry	Non-Agricultural Work	Vocations Total
1970	11568033	2.64	0.12	1.42	0.35	0.86	89.95	0.46	5754931
1975	13122254	2.82	0.07	2.18	0.42	0.77	85.21	8.52	6.577130
1980	15137801	4.62	0.07	2.91	0.46	1.00	85.25	5.69	7.053734
1985	17535704	4.87	0.08	3.28	0.66	1.19	82.49	7.42	7.879129

The Age Groups 15 and Over Were Taken in the Period 1950-55; The Age Groups 12 and Over, in the Period 1970-85.

Pregnant women and feeding mothers are also given certain privileges. A woman is entitled to six weeks paid leave before giving birth and to another six weeks after the birth. If she so wishes it she may take a further six months' unpaid leave. A mother who is feeding her child has also certain rights, namely she is allowed two extra half-hour periods per day (both counted as working time) to enable her to feed the child. Any work place employing upwards of 100 women workers has to provide a special nursing room, and if there are more than 300 women employees there has to be a nursery. Maternity and child heath services are run by the state and are free of charge. More and more organizations are providing creches and pre-school facilities for the children of their employees.

22. Legislation regarding employment thus seeks to establish a balance between two important principles written into the Constitution:

(1) Article 49 reads: "everyone has the right and the duty to work".

(2) Article 41 reads: "The family is the foundution of Turkish society The State shall take the necessary measures and establish the necassary organization to ensure the peace and welfare of the family, especially the protection of the mother and children".

23. Much thought has gone into legislative planning regarding employment to ensure that these two principles are both upheld.

Marriage

24. Since the founding of the Republic, religious marriages are not recognized by law in Turkey. Marriage is a civil ceremony enacted before witnesses by an official of the State. A marriage can only be enacted with the consent of both parties. Divorce is permitted, and either party may sue for divorce.

Part Two of the Report

25. Reserves Placed on the "Convention on the Elimination of all Sorts of Discrimination Against Women"

Article 15 (1-2)- (Equality in Legal competence)

26. In the various legal opinions offered corcerning this topic, focus has been limited to the man-and-wife relationships and attention has been called to the fact that according to the Turkish Civil Law, Article 159,the working of the married woman in a job or her activity in a vocation is made contingent upon the consent of the husband, or upon the permmisson of the judge should the husband raise an objection. However, Article 15 speaks in general of the equality of men and women; marriage and family relationships are given specific treatment under Article 16. Thus the conflict with Article 159 might be better studied under Article 16 of the Convention.

27. In reality, even the husband's withdrawal of consent is no barrier to the working of the married woman. At the very most, the husband may sue for divorce, claiming that the wife's working without his consent has resulted in a severe disturbance in the conjugal relationship.

Article 15 (4)- (Equality of legal right in choosing and leaving the legal domicile)

28. So far as this article pertains to male and female equality as regards free movement, there is no problem. In point of relationship between husband and wife there is perhaps some disparity, but this should not be exaggerated. According to Turkish Civil Law, Article 152, "The husband is the head of the union. To him belongs ... the choice of domicile" and Article 21 of the same law decrees that the domicile of the married woman be that of the husband.

Article 16 (1) C- (Equality in duties and responsibilities during marriage and at the termination of marriage)

29. Article 152 of the Turkish Civil Law asserts the judgement that "The husband is the head of the union.... to him belongs the responsibility of supporting wife and children in a degree commensurate with his means."

Article 16 (1) d- (Equality in the rights and responsibilities related to children)

30. The situation is that "while the marriage is existent, mother and father act jointly as guardians. In the event of disagreement the father's voice is the stronger."

31. However, the joint consent of mother and father is necessary for a minor to be betrothed (TCL, Art. 82), or for him/her to marry(TCL, Art.90), for the adolescent to be proclaimed of age by the law court (TCL, Art.12), or for a child to be assigned to the care of foster parents (TCL, Art.254)

Article 16 (1) f-(Equality in the rights and responsibilities in such institutions related to children as guardianship or adoption)

32. Here the issue is that of guardianship. However, the disagreement in this respect between the Convention and the Turkish Civil Law is in the form of a reservation. However, since, according to the TCL, Art. 255, the adoption of a child by one of the parents is contingent upon the consent of the other, it might have been reasonable not to place an extra reseve on Article 16 (1) f.

Article 16 (1) g- (Equality in personal rights, including that of choosing a family name, vocation and job.)

33. As the TCL, Article 153, has it, the wife is not granted a right in the matter of family name; the same Article decrees that "The wife assume the family name of the husband." However, this law is at present under revision.

34. The disagreement between the Convention and the Turkish Civil Law as regards the choice of a vocation and job, is described in the comment in the 2. paragraph of Article 15 of the Convention. In fact, as the topics dealt with under Article 15(2) and Article 16(1) are closely connected, it might have been sufficient to place a reserve on only one of them, preferably on Article 16(1) g because it comprises clearly the matter of the family name too. Thus one might have avoided placing a reserve on Article 15(2) which involves a more comprehensive, and therefore more striking concept such as equality in legal competence.

35. Conclusion : It is argued that the withdrawal of the reserves we placed on Articles 15(2), 15(4) and 16(1) f is technically possible. Only, it will be necessary to provide some explanations for our withdrawal in so short time, of some of our reserves. Alternatively, we might think of withdrawing these three reserves when the work of amending the Turkish Civil Law has been completed.

The Other Countries that Placed the Same Reserves as Turkey

Article 15(2): Belgium, France

Article 15(4): Brazil, Ireland, Tunisia (by reason of declaration), England (of immigration)

Article 16(1)c: Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, France, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia

Article 16(1)d: Egypt, France, Ireland (where there is discrimination against men), Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia

Article 16(1)f: Bangladesh, Egypt, Ireland (where there is discrimination against men), Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia,England (by reason of declaration)

Article 16(1)g: Brazil, Egypt, France, Mauritius, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Tunisia

Mexico and Federal Germany have raised objections to the reserves placed on Article 16(1)c, d, f and g (Federal Germany, additionally, to that placed on Article 15(4) on the grounds of their incompatibility with the goals and the objectives of the Convention.

Milestones in the History of Turkish Women

1206 A medical school was founded by a woman named Gevher Nesibe Hatun, and took its name from her.

1271 The Seljuk Turks founded a hospital, the Kutlu Türkan Hospital; that is to say, a hospital was named after a woman.

14th Century. Turan Melek Hatun founded a library and it was called after her.

15th Century. The first Turkish woman poet, Zeynep Hatun.

1842 The first women's vocational schools were opened to train midwives.

1858 The first primary and middle schools were opened for girls.

1864 The first Turkish woman novelist Fatla Aliye was born.

1869 The first industrial vocational school for woman was opened.

1870 The first Teachers' Training School for women was opened.

1895 The first all women-staffed newspaper came out.

1917 İstanbul University opened a special technical teacher training department for women students and in this year the first group graduated. There were 18 of them.

1918 The first Turkish women asked to act in public; in 1920 Afife Jale performed on stage.

1919 Halide Edip (writer, novelist, MP and professor) held a large public rally in the large Sultan Ahmet Square in İstanbul and urged the country to fight its enemies.

1922 For the first time women students were enrolled into Haydarpaşa Medical Faculty. On graduation they received the title of Doctor.

1926 Military schools excepted, all institutions of education were opened to women.

1927 The education in all Middle Schools was, from now on, on co-educational lines.

1930 From now on women had the vote in municipal elections on equal terms with men.

1934 From now on women had the vote in general eletions on equal terms with men.

1935 The first Turkish woman pilot received her license.

1936 The first "Miss Turkey" to be chosen "Miss World."

1955 The Turkish War Academy accepted women students.

1979 For the first time in the world a woman was elected chairperson of the Administrative High Court.

1989 For the first time a woman was elected chairperson of the High Court of Appeals.

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